

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a method and apparatus for an interactive, peer-to-peer, multimedia streaming link to be setup in real-time between two or more remote computing devices, over communication network channels with network addresses, which may be either permanent or temporary. Each computing device is further equipped with an encoder, streaming transmitter, a player and network interface control unit to send and/or accept requests. An interactive peer-to-peer multimedia streaming session is established in real-time by a request from the source-computing device through a control channel, over the network, to a switching service to setup a direct link with a destination-computing device. The switching server then notifies the destination device about the request, and wait for its' acceptance. The switching service then determines the network address associated with either the source device or the destination computing device and the data ports that the peer-to-peer streaming will take place through. Then using the network addresses and the data ports of both computing devices, a real-time, peer-to-peer multimedia streaming system between the source computing device and the destination computing device is setup over the network channel.